



**For immediate release
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DCR CELEBRATES NEW BATHHOUSES AND BOARDWALKS AT HORSENECK BEACH STATE RESERVATION

State and local officials will gather at noon on Friday, July 18

The Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR) will hold a celebration with a number of state and local officials at Horseneck Beach State Reservation in Westport on Friday, July 18, at noon to highlight the completion of two new bathhouses, two dune-crossing boardwalks, and major utility improvements at the beach and campground area.

The \$8.5 million in improvements represent Phase 1 of major capital improvements at the reservation. The project dramatically improves accessibility to the beach and campground, and provides a more user-friendly and environmentally friendly facility. Major environmental features of Phase 1 include raised bathhouse buildings to allow sand migration and beach self-nourishment; boardwalks to protect flora and fauna in the dunes area; lighting, ventilation, building materials, and waste disposal systems designed with conservation in mind; and composting toilets and cold-water showers expected to help decrease water usage by at least 50 percent.

"These improvements showcase the state's commitment toward enhancing the facilities and landscape at Horseneck Beach," said State Senator Joan M. Menard. "Once the project is completed, residents and visitors alike will be pleased with the new amenities and grounds."

State Representative Michael J. Rodrigues said, "In my many years as a state representative, I've participated on many public construction projects. However, I have never worked with an agency that has so listened to its constituents and run the project so smoothly as in this case. The Department of Conservation and Recreation has worked tirelessly with the town of Westport and Friends of Horseneck Beach in the execution of their work. I look forward to continuing this relationship in the future."

Horseneck Beach is one of DCR's most popular coastal properties, attracting hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. Phase 2 of the rehabilitation, expected in fiscal year 2009, includes construction of a new Beach Services Building that will house a modern, more efficient park administration headquarters area, lifeguard facilities, a first aid station, and additional public restrooms. Phase 3, expected in fiscal year 2010, will be a redesign of the Central Plaza area to include landscaped pedestrian pathways and shade structures.

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Department of Conservation & Recreation

These are the first major improvements at the beach since it became a state reservation more than 50 years ago. All the new structures will be universally accessible.

“These new buildings are not only state-of-the-art technologically, they are also very beautiful,” DCR Commissioner Rick Sullivan said of the new bathhouses. “In fact, we recently learned that the new bath houses have been selected to receive a 2008 Building of America Award by Real Estate and Construction Review Magazine’s New England edition, an award that honors the region’s most innovative, unique, and challenging projects.”

Sullivan commended the designers and contractors that worked on the project, including the bath house designers, Stephen Kelleher Architects of Fairhaven; boardwalk designers, CLE Engineering of Marion; utilities system designer, Weston and Sampson of Peabody; building construction contractor, Builders Systems Inc. of Auburn; boardwalk contractor, Cape Cod Builders of Plymouth; and utilities contractor D&C Construction of Rockland.

At Friday’s celebration, Sullivan will be joined by state legislators and town officials at the new East Bath House. Following the event, tours will be given of the new facilities.

DIRECTIONS: From Route 24 south, take Route 195 east to exit 10. Pick up Route 88 south for 11 miles to the end, and follow the signs to Horseneck Beach State Reservation.

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The Massachusetts Department of Conservation and Recreation (DCR), an agency of the Executive Office of Energy and Environmental Affairs, oversees 450,000 acres of parks and forests, beaches, bike trails, watersheds, and dams, in addition to 278 bridges and miles of roadways. Led by Commissioner Richard K. Sullivan Jr., the agency’s mission is to protect, promote, and enhance our common wealth of natural, cultural, and recreational resources. To learn more about DCR, our facilities, and our programs, please visit www.mass.gov/dcr. Contact us at mass.parks@state.ma.us.